UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/816
23 July 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 23 JULY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a statement issued by the Government of Burundi on the Arusha negotiations between Burundian parties - with Mwalimu Julius Nyerere as facilitator - and specifically on the work of the session of 5 to 17 July 1999 (see annex).

The Government of Burundi reaffirms, in plain language, its determination to continue the Burundian peace process on the internal and external fronts. It hopes and prays for the conclusion of a peace agreement as soon as possible.

The Government of Burundi appeals to all the parties to act responsibly. It also appeals for support for the facilitation of the process. It further appeals for the international community's support in condemning and bringing to an immediate end the acts of violence admittedly perpetrated by certain armed groups, which were nonetheless invited to and were present at Arusha. The process of negotiation and inclusive dialogue is the only means of settling the present Burundian conflict.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Gamaliel NDARUZANIYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued on 21 July 1999 by the Government of Burundi on the Arusha negotiations

During its regular meeting on Tuesday, 20 July 1999, the Council of Ministers evaluated the work of the session of negotiations between Burundian parties which has just concluded in Arusha (5-17 July 1999). It noted with consternation that serious charges were gratuitously made by the facilitator, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, against the Government of the Republic of Burundi, particularly during the closing meeting.

The Government would therefore like to make the following statement so as to enlighten national and international opinion:

1. For three years, the Government of the Republic of Burundi has freely and sovereignly opted for inclusive dialogue as a means of settling the Burundian conflict. So far, it has been the driving force behind the ongoing peace process. The Government reiterates its commitment to pursue this dialogue on both the internal and external fronts. It hopes and prays for a peace agreement to be concluded as soon as possible. It cannot shirk its responsibility, for the pursuit of peace must begin with Burundians themselves.

2. There is no objective basis for the allegations made by the facilitator, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, against the Government of Burundi and the President of the Republic, Mr. Pierre Buyoya. The Government most categorically rejects those allegations. It did not cause the deadlocks in Arusha - far from it. It therefore refuses to be used as a scapegoat.

3. Nevertheless, the Government considers that a halt to the acts of violence continually perpetrated against the Burundian people is a matter of urgency and priority. Whereas elsewhere negotiations begin with a ceasefire, in Arusha the question is constantly avoided. The Government of Burundi has always demanded a halt to violence, and will continue this campaign in all international forums. Nothing can justify those unmentionable crimes. Moreover, the continuation of hostilities makes the peace process totally meaningless.

4. The exclusion of certain armed bands from the Arusha negotiations is an impediment to the peace process which must be removed. In the so-called global negotiations, what reasonable grounds can there be for rejecting any of the parties?

5. In a context in which the rebel groups are using extreme violence against the Burundian population and the Government, it is, to say the least, obvious that the Government's role is not to organize any armed bands, but instead to protect the population against such violence. Facilitators are supposed to discharge their responsibilities.

6. The Government will not allow itself to be diverted from the search for peace. It appeals to all the partners in the peace process to devote their

efforts in pursuit of the general interest and to work for peace seriously and realistically.

Luc RUKINGAMA
Minister for Communication and
Spokesman for the Government